

Charles Bewley, *How Academics Get Published: Demystifying Book Publishers' Expectations of Academic Authors*. Gaborone: Lightbooks, 2024, ISBN: ebook 978-99912-71-66-8, 140 pages

Charles Bewley, a Botswana-based author and publisher has come up with a book that is a must-read for all aspiring academic writers, as well as seasoned ones, in the publication arena. Though the book starts off by referring to itself as a monograph—a rather apologetic and self-effacing statement—rather than a veritable driver's manual for an erstwhile author interacting with a publisher; a *raison d'être* that covers a diverse *sine qua non* of academic publishing; an absolute essential and prerequisite for graduate students and beyond. I would rather refer to this publication as an essential manual for an academic trying to navigate the treacherous waters of the publishing industry. There is a strong tendency for academic disciplines to plunge headlong into their respective areas of specialisation at the tertiary level, to the benign neglect of the intricacies of the publishing industry. While this manual is an absolute essential for aspiring authors, it is still instructive for seasoned authors with multiple citations and references on publishing houses. I make this statement, tongue-in-cheek, that despite being an accomplished scholar with over 20 books and refereed journal publications, including over 380 citations in publications tracked by Academia.edu to date, and still counting.

The book covers a wide range of topics, from the core of publishing -how to get published (and self-publishing), how to produce electronic books and e-books, the publishers' expectations, ordering parts of a manuscript, processes and technology in manuscript preparation, finding a publisher, getting a royalty contract, sales and marketing, revisions and new editions, and indexing. The book is basically a tutorial on how to avoid the bloop, blunders, and hurdles of getting your manuscript published, based on the experience of an undoubtedly seasoned book publisher. Unbeknownst to some, the roles involved in publishing a book are quite complex and holistic, as are the complex routes of self-publishing, vanity publishing, and the caveats and pitfalls of publishing scams. However, rather than dwelling on the dangers associated with publishing, the book raises a positive ante on the theory and practice of how to raise funds for book production.

An exciting yet engaging writing style of this book is that, though it lays down the do's and don'ts ground rules in a didactic teacher-talky style, it is rather conversational in presentation, rather than a pious non-interactive church sermon style. The book makes for easy reading, with very lively adjectival expressions peppered all over in a witty way. For example, an overuse of commas is likened to sprinkling them like pepper on a plate; equally hilarious is a caution about reckless overuse of powerful editing tools such as *search* and *replace*, leading to marvellous non-words like *fatmosphere*, where 'air' is changed to 'atmosphere'.

The manual is an easy read, even over a two-day period; rather than a dry, lengthy academic disquisition or excogitation on HOW TO GET PUBLISHED. The book reads more like an animated traditional African folktale with cautionary endings of dos and don'ts of the Baboon/Python story, the Biblical David/Goliath encounter, and Harry Potter or Tom & Jerry scenes. There are examples of a well-designed textbook page for teachers, written by an academic. Equally useful are examples of page layouts of tables and charts, as well as an example of an author's editorial information form. Even for seasoned authors, chapter seven of the manual contains some important information on publishers in different jurisdictions and publishers' submission guidelines in chapter eight. Chapter nine covers essential information to guide authors on negotiating matters like copyright contracts and royalties, as well as open access and e-books. Authors will find the section dealing with software quite handy. (One recalls the frustration of having to adapt a piece of commercial software for use in compiling a dictionary in the late 1980s and navigating the syntax for formatting the structure of definitions

and punctuation.) This manual covers a whole range of publishable materials from dissertations and theses to full-fledged books and textbooks. I, therefore, recommend this manual unreservedly to inexperienced newcomers in publishing and fellow seasoned veterans.

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